Pathway to Innovation
Entrepreneurism education, business mentoring and proof-of-concept grants to transform university research into products that benefit society.
Innovation improves our lives, fuels the economy, and creates jobs.

Yet despite federal government investment in university research, brilliant ideas can and do falter without a clear pathway between research discovery and private-sector application.

VON LIEBIG CENTER PATHWAY TO INNOVATION

The von Liebig Entrepreneurism Center at the UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering is dedicated to mentoring faculty and student inventors through the proof-of-concept process. The Center provides commercialization support to bridge the gap between exciting discoveries and products that address market needs.

Our experienced technology and business advisors guide faculty and student inventors throughout the technology assessment, proof-of-concept and early stages of the commercialization process. Once technology feasibility is demonstrated, these innovators can attract the entrepreneurial talent and capital that they need to advance their technology toward the marketplace.

The Center primarily serves the UC San Diego engineering and science community, but many of our programs extend to universities in the Southern California region and well beyond.

VON LIEBIG CENTER SERVICES

Commercialization Assistance

Our experienced technology and business advisors provide commercialization assistance to faculty and students interested in exploring the commercialization of their inventions. Our von Liebig advisors provide active business mentoring and product development expertise throughout the process. Their extensive network to the region’s ecosystem provides access to the resources start-up companies need to launch.

Our business advisors are successful entrepreneurs who work as consultants to the university. They are selected for their expertise in specific technical disciplines and have experience working in both start-up and large corporate settings. They bring a unique understanding of the constraints and culture of the university setting.

Technology Acceleration Programs (TAPs)

The von Liebig Center works with government, foundation and industry sponsors to encourage university innovation in specific industry sectors through our Technology Acceleration Programs (TAPs). Regional university inventors are invited to compete for proof-of-concept grants and business mentoring from von Liebig advisors. Faculty or graduate student applicants present their commercialization plans to a panel of industry sector experts, and the most promising technologies and innovation teams receive von Liebig TAPs awards for one year.

Entrepreneurism Training

The von Liebig Center’s education program prepares science and engineering students to become more effective contributors in fast-moving technology companies. Our series of four graduate-level courses expose students to the basic principles of entrepreneurism, product development, technology assessment and venture creation.

Short Courses and Workshops

The von Liebig Center’s proven track record has received world-wide attention, and has been recognized by the Kauffman Foundation as a model for proof-of-concept centers. The von Liebig Center staff and advisors provide workshops and short courses to other universities, corporations and institutions to help enable and promote innovation worldwide.
With a grant from the von Liebig Center, UCSD electrical engineering professor Sujit Dey created prototype software to dynamically shape data in applications as a function of the network and device conditions. This became the core technology to launch Ortiva Wireless, which now employs more than 70 associates and delivers solutions for proactive management of mobile video and rich media content delivery.

After 35 years of research into the basic mechanisms of inflammation, UCSD Bioengineering Professor Geert Schmid-Schoenbein discovered a mechanism for shock. Through the von Liebig Center, Schmid-Schoenbein (right) connected with entrepreneur and investor John Rodenrys. Together, the team started InflammaGen Therapeutics, which is now conducting a Phase 2 clinical trial of its life-saving treatment for shock and multi-organ failure.

As a graduate student, Mike Chi (UCSD Ph.D., 2010) researched sensors to monitor heart and brain activity without the need for skin contact. After working with the von Liebig Center, Chi and Faculty advisor Gert Cauwenberghs launched Cognionics. Today, Chi is the CTO of Cognionics, which has received a NASA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant to develop the sensor for cardiac monitoring of astronauts.

UCSD computer science professor David Kriegman (far left), and Satya Mallick (UCSD Ph.D. 2006, pictured 2nd from left) applied their computer vision and machine learning expertise to realistic photo enhancement. With the help of the von Liebig Center, they found a market for this innovation in the beauty industry. Mallick is now the VP of Engineering at TAAZ and its wildly popular Taaz.com website, where millions of women virtually try on makeup and hairstyles from the comfort of their home. Also pictured, early TAAZ employees Kevin Barnes (VP Engineering), Frank Lam (UCSD B.A. 2007), and Charmaine Mossbarger (UCSD B.A. 2007).
Thank you to the following organizations who have invested with UCSD in the mission of the von Liebig Center.

VON LIEBIG ENTREPRENEURISM CENTER PARTNERS

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National Collegiate Investors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA)

VON LIEBIG CENTER TRACK RECORD
Snapshot 2001-2012
• More than 1,000 students trained through graduate level entrepreneurism courses
• $5 million in proof-of-concept grants and business mentoring to more than 110 innovator teams
• Contributed to the creation of 32 companies which have raised over $150 million in capital and created more than 200 jobs

von Liebig Entrepreneurism Center

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